

VZCZCXRO2032
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #3011/01 2520805
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 090805Z SEP 07
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3253
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003011

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/07/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [ECON](#) [PTER](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: BAGHDAD EPRT: PALESTINIANS SEEK SERVICES,
SECURITY, DETAINEE RELEASES, MOSQUE MONITORS

REF: A) BAGHDAD 02670 B) BAGHDAD 1068

Classified By: E-PRT Leader Eric Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) This is a Baghdad 2 BCT E-PRT reporting cable.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: During an August 20 meeting with Baghdad E-PRT and 2BCT/2ID, Palestinians from the Beladiat neighborhood of Baghdad's 9 Nissan district raised several concerns: poor basic services, insecurity, and the status of detainees. They requested resumption of patrols in their area by Coalition Forces (CF), and participation in future searches by Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). Finally, the Palestinian representatives requested assistance in ensuring security for their mosques. The compound in which they live is the largest concentration of Palestinians in Iraq; it includes roughly 1,200 families and approximately 7,000 individuals. 2BCT/2ID will address services, security, and detainee issues, and coordinate a critical infrastructure security project. The E-PRT will discuss services and Palestinian representation with 9 Nissan officials. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)3. (C) On August 20, Baghdad 2 E-PRT Leader Whitaker and 2BCT/2ID DCO LTC Dunham visited the Palestinian compound in Beladiat, 9 Nissan, to learn about the concerns of the community first-hand. The meeting took place at the suggestion of Human Rights Advisor to the Vice President Omar Al-Jaboori, and included Hammad Khalaf, a Sunni representative involved in ongoing reconciliation discussions.

Basic Services, Security Poor; Inquiry Made on Detainees

[1](#)4. (C) The 90-minute meeting involved five Palestinian representatives, who made the following comments:

-- The Palestinian community in Beladiat neighborhood includes 1200 families, with nearly 7,000 total individuals and 600 school-aged children. They need a clinic, soccer field or other youth activity site, and a school of their own.

-- Basic services are the community's principal concern: electricity is rare) perhaps 30 minutes every 4-5 days; there is no clean water; sewers back up into ground-level units; propane is not distributed; and there is much uncollected trash littering the neighborhood.

-- Strangers live on the margins of the compound, and have fired weapons into it. Residents want them out, in part because these strangers appear to help the Jaiysh al-Mahdi (JAM). IEDs have been planted in the area, and blamed falsely on Palestinians. Furthermore, mortars are sometimes fired from the compound area, placing the Palestinians at risk.

-- Two dangerous places are the local gas station and the hospital; kidnappers often target Palestinians at both sites.

-- Detainees were also a key issue: a March 2007 Iraqi National Police (NP) raid supported by JAM resulted in several detentions, with six still in custody (ref B). A February 16 raid by the CF and NP reportedly resulted in three detentions, all of whom also remain in custody. The Palestinians provided lists of detainees, and presented a June 13 letter from the UNHCR to Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshya Zebari inquiring about the status of seven Palestinian detainees.

-- In emergency situations, when Palestinians called Rustimayah and FOB Loyalty, they did not always connect with interpreters who were able to muster assistance;

-- The Iraqi Army (IA) is trusted more than the Iraqi Police (IP); however, Palestinians prefer that CF re-start patrols and participate in searches, if needed, as they are most trusted. No contraband has been found on any of the 6 or 7 searches conducted so far of Palestinian homes. As early as 2003, CF came to Palestinian shops, bakeries, barbers, etc. and walked around the neighborhood freely.

-- Palestinians have been in Baghdad since as early as 1948. Some locals have tried to push them into sectarian issues.

-- The compound was shelled on 13 December 2006, resulting in several deaths. Palestinians feel surrounded, and it is hard for children to attend schools or people to go to hospitals.

-- They expressed concern regarding retrieving bodies from

BAGHDAD 00003011 002 OF 002

morgues, which are also dangerous.

-- There formerly were barriers around the compound in places to slow traffic; barriers around the mosque were removed for a recent "united prayer" event. Some spoke of the possibility of installing a security wall around the compound. The DCO spoke of placing barriers at key streets to assist with security.

-- Although the compound is in Beladiat, the designated neighborhood for the Palestinians is Fedeliyah, rather than Beladiat. It is also dangerous to go there, and going to the district hall is often treacherous.

-- A woman was recently kidnapped by IPs near the compound and later killed. The Palestinians provided the car description and license plate number.

-- The neighborhood was of a Christian majority before the fall of Saddam Hussein, although most had since departed.

-- Palestinians are concerned that while some internally displaced persons receive money, they do not.

-- The Palestinians are interested in the concept of critical infrastructure security for their mosque, and will compile a list of potential monitors/guards.

E-PRT and 2BCT/2ID Follow-up Actions

15. (C) To address these concerns, E-PRT and 2BCT/2ID will take several actions, to include exploring - during meetings with 9 Nissan and Beladiat directors general and neighborhood/district council members - possibilities for better municipal services for Palestinian areas; ensuring that a maneuver unit representative will be present at future meetings; and addressing immediate needs, such as trucking water into the neighborhood and installing barriers at key street intersections. The E-PRT will also work to improve

responses to tip calls, and will follow up on the matter of the Palestinian detainees. Finally, the E-PRT and 2BCT/2ID will respond to the community's interest in critical infrastructure security, and vet proposed compound monitors.
BUTENIS